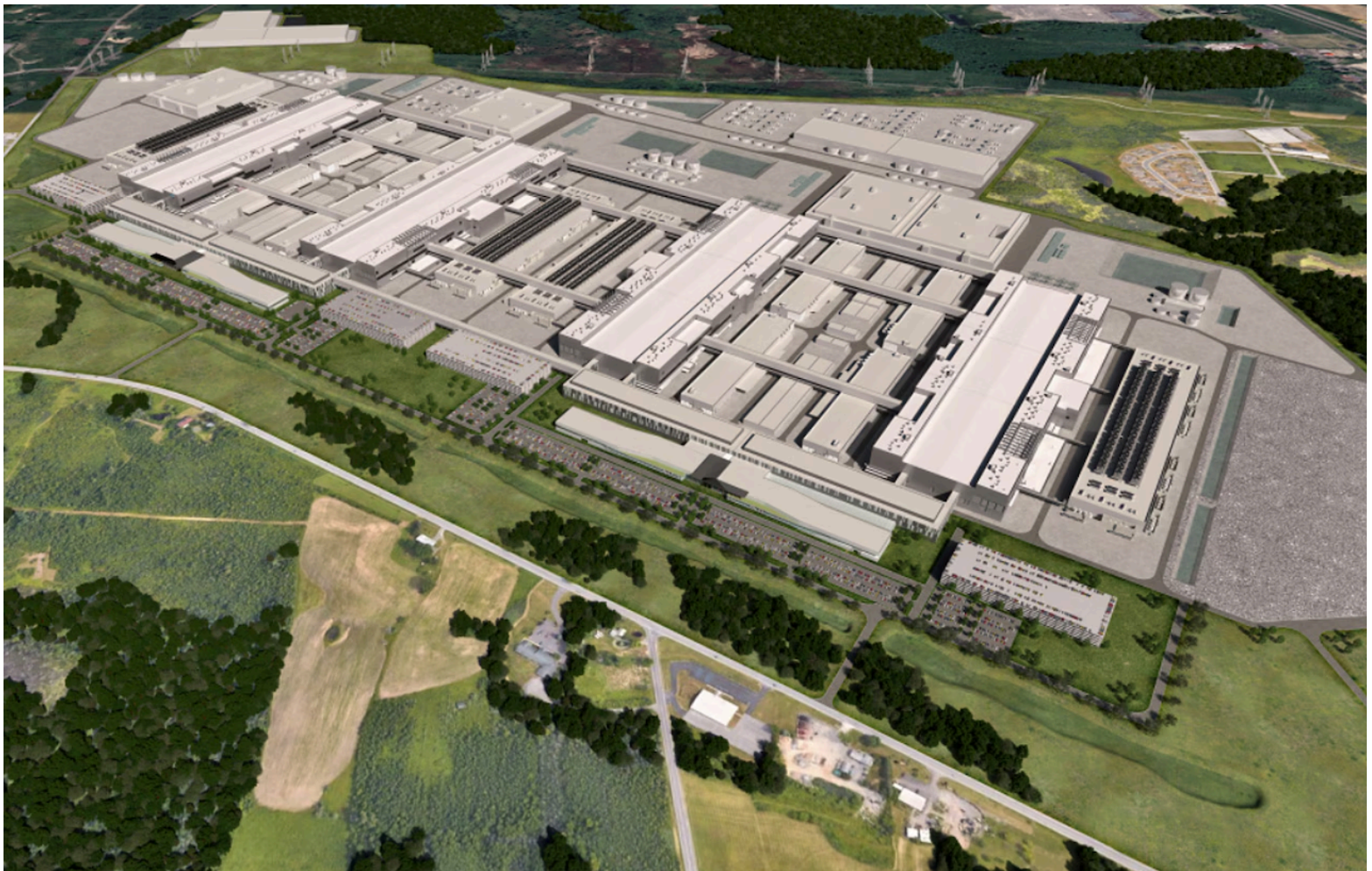


OPINION

SustainCNY to McMahon: We need more time to comment on Micron report (Guest Opinion)

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This rendering of Micron Technology's planned chipmaking complex in Clay was included in the company's draft environmental impact statement filed in March. Route 31 is at the lower portion of the photo. Caughdenoy Road is to the left. Micron Technology



By Hilary-Anne Coppola | SustainCNY

Hilary-Anne Coppola, of Fayetteville, is a community organizer. She and other members of the SustainCNY coalition and allied groups sent a version of the following letter to Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon on June 20. The names of the 16 organizations that signed the letter are listed at the end of the text.

Dear County Executive McMahon,

We are writing to you in light of your statement that only 45 days for public input and one day for public hearings are allowed for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the four microchip factories that Micron Technology wants to build in Clay, New York ("Release of Micron impact report delayed, further crunching construction timeline," June 1, 2025). This viewpoint represents a disregard of public health, safety and well-being related to what Micron is planning in Central New York. We ask that you reconsider your position and advocate for a longer comment period.

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Micron's industrial development plan — the largest in New York history — is actually a series of major projects, including wastewater treatment plants and pipelines, water supply pipelines and pumping facilities, transportation infrastructure improvements and energy infrastructure development. These are in addition to direct impacts from the factories' construction, including the destruction of hundreds of acres of wetlands and forests, which will require Micron to re-create the endangered species habitat and flooding mitigation that the wetlands provide.

We disagree with the presupposition made by you and Ray D'Hollander's letter (["Engineer: No need to drag out Micron decision after environmental review comes out,"](#) May 28, 2025): Restricting public participation to 45 days is entirely insufficient. This is not simply a "yes or no decision," as Hollander asserts. It is a decision which includes examining each impact in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) processes. The DEIS must also examine and the public must review how each identified impact will be mitigated or managed to avoid or limit harms. A major threat from microchip factories — with potentially widespread and catastrophic effects — comes from the industry's use of many toxic compounds to make the microchips, such as PFAS ("forever chemicals"), nitrogen trifluoride and arsine.

Further, we must not only consider immediate and long-term threats to public and environmental health from factories of this magnitude and in this industry, but the impacts on every public service including housing, first responders, health care and transportation — not to mention fiscal and economic outcomes of Micron's influence. Our communities want to understand and give effectual input on these possibilities and how Micron will manage each of the impacts. What are the risks? What are the opportunities?

The sheer variety of issues alone leads us to know that 45 days is inadequate. Consider the number and enormity of critical topics, which we have briefly touched on. Each component alone deserves significant public engagement, as was done for the [Interstate 81](#) viaduct project. We do not want a dangerous situation that overshadows or even comes close to the industrial pollution done to Onondaga Lake, which is now a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site and an industrial waste landfill which requires ongoing containment, monitoring and remediation.

We repeat our request, originally sent in March 2025 to the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce (US DOC), for a 120-day public comment period. The DEIS and its appendices are close to 20,000 pages long. Much of these documents are highly technical, making it impossible for the general public to understand without support. The 45-day (or 47-day) review period beginning on June 25 is a time when many people are on summer vacation and unavailable. This time frame creates a significant barrier to participation in the DEIS review.

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Public input should be widely gathered and used to advise decisions by your administration, OCIDA, US DOC and Micron as this project progresses. So far, opportunity for public input has been clearly lacking.

A June 10 press release from US DOC indicates that the federal administration wants to fast-track plans for Micron’s four proposed factories — which would use as much energy as Vermont and New Hampshire combined, more water than all of Syracuse, and create widespread changes that are not contained by county borders. Minimizing public input in order to quickly conclude the Environmental Impact Assessment process is a fool’s errand.

OCIDA and US DOC have been working on the Micron DEIS for over two years, and we understand that you have been a proponent of development at the “White Pine” area in Clay since you were a county legislator. This may make you eager to go along with what US DOC’s announcement suggests: to disregard the combined NEPA and SEQRA processes and the protections they provide us. However, we trust you understand that your position in office is accountable to the people — your constituents — and not developers or federally appropriated project funding.

Cutting the review process short disregards people’s right and responsibility to give informed input on something that will affect their future and the future of generations to come. Our leaders must pursue opportunities to minimize or eliminate unjust and unacceptable practices. Adequate time for public input on four factories with a 20-plus year construction time, and perhaps a 100-year operation time, is not too much to ask.

Over 1,500 people have signed SustainCNY's petition calling for 120 days of review time and five public hearings. Can we rely on you to advocate for a review period that prioritizes people and CNY communities? SustainCNY's requests to OCIDA and US DOC for an extension of the review period have gone unanswered. We look forward to your reply.

Organizations signing on to this letter include the Alliance for a Green Economy, Cayuga Climate Action, Citizen Action of New York, Climate Change Awareness and Action, CNY Solidarity Coalition, Food and Water Watch, GreeningUSA, Jobs to Move America, Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation, Onondaga Audubon, Sierra Club Central & Northern NY, Sterling Water Stewards, Syracuse Peace Council, Urban Jobs Task Force of Syracuse, We of Italian and Syracuse Heritage CNY and Workers Center of CNY.

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